

Gagnant d'Amour

by Erina-chan

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Summary: Erina-chan's FIRST EVER fanfic! On a return visit to the Indigo League at 14, Ash finds himself battling his hormones more often than Trainers... COMPLETE, sequeledX2

## 1. Chapter 1-3

### CHAPTER ONE

### CHAPTER ONE

::revised::

Ash's Dream and the Flying Toast

\_The water rippled softly as Ash wrapped his arms around the redheaded girl fishing beside him. His movements knocked her arms and her fishing rod broke the glass-like surface of the river. Misty sighed happily and buried her face in his jacket. Grudgingly, Ash helped Misty up. She reached behind her back and pulled out a huge metal gong.\_

—

Huh?\_ thought Ash. This is getting surreal\_  |\_ as Misty brought the gong down on his head.\_\_\_\_

—

He sat up with a start and looked angrily around to see who had woken him. Standing a little way off next to a gong, holding a beater was Misty. Ash looked at her, just as angry.

\*\*" You know there's such a thing as shaking" he remarked, sardonically as he pushed past her to find Brock.\*\*

\*\*

The gang were back in the Pok  mon League village, 3 years after Ash had lost with Charizard against Richie. In those 3 years, Ash had won the Orange League and afterwards, Brock had rejoined the group. Ash had worked hard and he was ready to compete in the Indigo Pok  mon League once more; and this time - he promised himself - he was going to win!

Ash sighed as he slumped down in a chair in the kitchen of the little cottage. Brock appeared out of nowhere wearing his pink apron and wielding two plates.

\*\*\*"Where's Misty?" he asked, surprised. \*\*\*"I thought she went in to wake you up?"\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"She did, " said Ash, his mouth already full of food. \*\*\*"She got out that damn gong and totally ruined my romantic  " He stopped as he realised Brock was staring at him with an eyebrow raised and a sweatdrop. \*\*\*"  book. Yeah, that Mills and Boons thing she gave me. She, er, stepped on it and ripped out a few pages."\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\_Nice save,\*\*he thought to himself, sweatdropping as he stared at his plate. Brock shrugged, and turned back to his cooking.\*\*\_

\_\*\*

Misty came out of the bathroom then; her hair was wet and she had a towel round her neck.

\*\*\*"Hey Misty, you look like a drowned Raticate!" Ash laughed, and ducked as a piece of toast came flying at him.\*\*

\*\*

\_If four years of travelling with Misty has taught me anything, it's good reflexes, he thought, until a few mushrooms whacked him in the face.\_

\_

\*\*\*"So Ash"    asked Misty sitting down at the table opposite him, \*\*\*"are you ready for your match today?" At the mention of a battle Ash's eyes gleamed over.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"You bet I am!"    he yelled, jumping up from the table. \*\*\*"I'm on the Rock Field."\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"What Pok  mon are you using?"    asked Misty, with a mouth full of toast. Ash looked at her, surprised. Misty may have been his best friend but she always acted like she didn't care about his

battles.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Totodile, Donphan and Pikachu"\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Good team," remarked Misty quietly. \*\*"So, what time's your match?"\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*" Half three" Ash looked at his watch. 8.56. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Well, I'm going for a walk" said Misty, returning Togepi to its ball and stuffing it in her bag. She paused at the door. \*\*"Do you wanna come?"\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Gee Misty, I thought that after 4 years of walking with me, you'd be sick of it" Ash sweatdropped.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Fine!" said Misty angrily, as she turned and walked out of the door.\*\*

\*\*

"Wait! Wait! I wanna come!" called Ash quickly, jumping up from his seat. "Come on Pikachu!"

## Chapter Two

::revised::

### Misty's Mystery

\*\* \*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Wonder where Misty is" mumbled Ash to Pikachu as he wandered down the road kicking a stone.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Kachu" \_[Dunno] Ash stopped as he noticed familiar red hair in a caf   window across the street. He smiled slightly. She was talking intently to someone - but Ash couldn't see who it was. He silently slipped into the bustling caf   and into an empty booth behind Misty and her companion.\_\*\*

\*\*\_

                                 From here, he could see this person clearly.

It was a girl with blonde hair and big blue eyes made even bigger by the glasses she wore. Her hair was long, but fashionably cropped at the front. She was wearing a black skirt that landed on the knees of her long legs; and every inch of her oozed style and sophistication. Ash disliked her on sight.

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â He sat back in the red leather couch and strained his ears, but above all the noise all he could hear was random words.

\*\*\*"Ahem" came an angry voice from above. Ash looked up to see a very pissed off waitress staring at the table. Ash stared too, and realised he had been playing with the salt shaker, and he'd spelt out the letters M and A on the table in salt. \*\*\*"Can I get you something to go with your â€|salt?" asked the snooty waitress.

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Er thanks, I'm fine," Ash began, but was harshly reminded via a static bolt of Pikachu, who was currently under the table. \*\*\*"Actually can I get a bottle of ketchup please?"\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"A bottle of ketchup?" repeated the waitress, raising her eyebrows.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Yeah, er, to go with the saltâ€|" Ash grinned, scratching the back of his head sheepishly. When Pikachu saw the bottle arrive, she jumped up onto the table and started licking it straight out of the container. The waitress, regardless of the yellow rat licking ketchup from the public bottle, walked away. Just then, the blonde mystery girl spotted Pikachu. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Like, no way!" she squealed to Misty. \*\*\*"Look at that cute Pikachu eating that ketchup!" \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"â€|ketchup?" repeated Misty, slowly. She whirled around and reached over the back of her seat. Without even bothering to look at who was cowering in the seat behind her, Misty grabbed the person's collar and pulled Ash over the back of the seat, whilst the girl watched, sweatdropping. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Jeez Ash, now you're stalking me?" yelled Misty, her head had grow to about three times its normal size. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"For your information!" Ash yelled back, \*\*\*"You invited me AND it's a free country. Me and Pikachu can go into any cafÃ© we want to!"\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Yeah, so I can kick you out of any café I want to!" Misty yelled back, brandishing her oversized fist in the glaring boy's face.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Er, Misty? Is this a bad time?" Ash and Misty stopped and stared at the blushing girl sitting opposite them.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Oh no, of course not!" Misty said. She turned back to Ash. \*\*"This is my cousin, Linda Winhamall. Linda, this is myâ€|Ash Ketchum."

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Linda fluttered her fake eyelashes, and twirled a strand of her cropped strawberry blonde hair around her finger. Ash glared at her - she had the same facial features as Misty and Daisy, and her eyes resembled those of Lily. Her hair looked like it had once been a faint orange, but now was so highlighted and altered it was impossible to know for sure.

\*\*"I'm very happy to meet you, Misty's Ash," she said playfully, slipping her glasses knowingly down the bridge of her nose so she could peer over the frames. Misty and Ash started to blush.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Oh, you know what I mean Lin," Misty said, with sweatdrops galore. She turned to Ash again. \*\*"Linda is a Normal PokÃ©mon Trainer."\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Oh, so what am I?" asked Ash angrily.Â \*\*"Abnormal?" Misty and Linda facevaulted.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Er, Misty means that I train PokÃ©mon of the Normal element. You know, like Jigglypuff and Raticate." Linda explained.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Huh." Ash grunted.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Ooh" cried Linda, jumping up. \*\*"I've got to go and pick up my PokÃ©mon from Nurse Joy at the PokÃ©mon Centre. My match on the Ice Field starts in an hour!" She turned to her redheaded cousin. \*\*"Will you be there, cuz?"\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*"I wouldn't miss it Lin." The blonde dropped some coins on the table to pay for the Diet Coke she had been sipping and practically skipped out of the door in the direction of the Pok  mon Centre.\*\*

\*\*

                              When she was gone, Ash slid round the leather booth so he was sitting where Linda had been. Pikachu came bounding over from the booth behind, leaving an empty ketchup bottle on the table.

\*\*"Pi Pikachupi" [\_Hey Misty] \*\*"Pika, pi, chu, pikachu?" [\_Who was that?]\*\*\_\*\*\_\*\*

\*\*\_\*\*\_

\*\*"She's my cousin," said Misty, absentmindedly stroking Pikachu's ears.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"You seem to get along well with her." Said Ash quietly.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Well, if you don't give yourself the job of jumping down my throat every 10 minutes, you'd find that I'm pretty easy to get along with!" Ash shifted uncomfortably. Misty continued. \*\*"We were supposed to go on our Pok  mon journey together, but her parents decided that 10 was a bit young, and didn't let her go till last year. I left on my own and (she laughed) \*\*fished you up."\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*"So if she had been with you, I would have had to travel with TWO girls?" laughed Ash in mock horror.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Nope." Said Misty, rising from the table. \*\*"I wouldn't have come with you." She dropped some money on the table as well. \*\*"Come on Ash," she said to the silent boy, \*\*"Lets go drop your Pok  mon off with Nurse Joy." \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

### CHAPTER THREE

\*\*::revised::\*\*

#### Brock and the Nurse Joy Intern

Brock was sitting in the Pok  mon Centre. After Misty and Ash had disappeared he had headed down to er, \_talk\_ to a Nurse Joy. The one on duty at this Centre was the Joy from Lavender Town. She was busy operating on a Cubone and had no time for Brock's puppy eyes (?) and adoring compliments.

Brock sat on the mint coloured sofa in the lobby, lazily watching the people go by. A pretty blonde girl with glasses dashed straight past him, and before he could say a word, she was gone again, clutching six Pok  balls to her chest. Brock sighed: she was more Ash's age anyway. Soon a short girl wearing a blue dress entered the centre and walked up to the front desk. She dropped 5 Pok  balls on the counter.

\*\*\*"Hello?" she called, leaning over the desk slightly to see into the back room. An average muffled voice was heard and the door to the average operating theatre opened; but it wasn't your average Nurse Joy who stepped out. \*\*

\*\*

After Brock had picked himself off the floor, he stared at the young woman now at the desk. She was a Joy alright, the pink hair was a dead give-away, but she wore it loose and it fell to just above her shoulders in wavy ripples. She tossed it back behind her ear as she leant on the counter and listened to the short girl; it looked as if she had literally chopped off the hoops that the Nurse Joy family's hair automatically grew into. She looked a lot younger too, more around Brock's age. She wore really heavy orange eyeshadow and black lipstick, creating an interesting effect. Her face was heavily powdered so her pale cheeks contrasted horribly with her dark lips. And she looked really, really uncomfortable in the standard pink dress/frilly apron combo clothing of a Nurse Joy.

The Trainer at the desk handed over her Pok  balls and left, as the 'Nurse Joy' busied herself with checking them in. Brock walked over to the front desk and stood there, gaping at her, with that familiar red hue on his face.

\*\*\*"Beautiful  " he murmured. \*\*\*"Beautiful  " She finished what she was doing and focused her attention on Brock.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Can I help you sir?"\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Er  I mean..uhhhh" Brock stuttered.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Are you going to check in or pick up some Pok  mon, because if you're just going to stare at me you have to stand over there," she said, delicately pointing with one highly polished fingernail. Brock obediently started walking in that direction, and the girl laughed and called him back.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"I'm only joking idiot!" she giggled. Brock immediately went into his 'suave-mode'. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Hi there!" he crooned. \*\*\*"My name's Slate, Brock Slate. I'm a PokÃ©mon Breeder, and I'm \*\*training to be the best! Lemme guess, your name is Joy." He delicately kissed her hand. She laughed, twisting a strand of short pink hair in one hand.\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Call me Jo."\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Jo?"\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Yeah, it helps me stand out from my sisters"and cousins"and aunts"and" Brock cut her off; he knew how long this could go on for.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Don't be silly! You're much more beautiful than the other Joys!" Jo blushed (not that you could tell under the powder) and was about to say something when"

\*\*

\*\*\*"Hey Brock!" came Misty's voice.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Pika!!" \_[Hey!\_] Brock facevaulted, twitching, but jumped up sweatdropping. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Hey guys, what are you doing here?" he asked. Ash didn't answer, pushed past Misty and picked up Pikachu. He set it gently down on the counter next to Jo, then reached for his belt and put a Lureball and a Heavyball in the nearby tray. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"What's with him?" Brock murmured to Misty. She shrugged off the question.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"He just met my cousin, and I don't think he likes her very much."\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"I understand." said the older teen, with a wicked twinkle in his eye (?). \*\*\*"It's always a shame \*\*when the fiancÃ© doesn't get along with his future in-laws!" Misty pulled out her trusty mallet from anime-hyperspace and whacked Brock into the back wall, face first.Â Jo gasped in concern as Brock slid down the wall, cracking it as he went. \*\*\*\*\*



\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Don't worry." said Ash, with no concern in his voice. \*\*\*"We'll pay for the wall."\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Joy darling!" called a voice from the operating theatre.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Yeah mum?" answered Jo.\*\*

\*\*

"Take a break dear, you're taking this intern stuff way too seriously sweetheart. Cubone's going to be fine. Take the rest of the day off."

\*\*\*"Thanks mum." Brock saw his chance.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Er, Jo? I don't suppose you'd want to spend your break with me? Wait â€" what am I saying? You \*\*probably have to go visit your boyfriend or somethingâ€|" Jo looked uncomfortable at the thought.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Brock? I'd love to. Let me check in your friend's PokÃ©mon and get changed, and we can all go \*\*somewhere together!" Jo flashed a smile at Brock, then turned and ran up a flight of stairs with Pikachu and the two PokÃ©balls in her arms. Pikachu chuued a farewell.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*"Uhhhhhhh" said Ash and Misty, sweatdropping. Brock's face was a picture of pure joy (no pun intended). \*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"You guys? I thinkâ€|I'm in love!"\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"Again?" laughed Misty. Then Brock started leaping around the lobby, catapulting over the poor Trainers resting on the couches and talking to the air. Almost like a reflex, Ash and Misty stepped back, pretending not to know their slitty-eyed travelling partner.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*"What's up with you Ash?" asked Misty, not bothering to hide the annoyance in her voice. Ash turned around to face the redhead who was half glaring at him with her arms folded across her chest. For a

fleeting moment, Ash's dream came to his mind, but he quickly pushed it out.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Huh?"\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"You don't like Linda."\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"What are you on? I don't even know your cousin properly!" Ash bluffed.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Yeah, like that ever stopped you from disliking anyone before." Misty suddenly changed the subject. \*\*"Hey Ash? How come this morning you were saying my name in your sleep?" Ash's heart took a giant leap.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Wh-h-hat?" he spluttered.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*"This morning." Misty repeated. \*\*"I went in to wake you up and you were talking about me. You \*\*said 'We have to go back now Misty.' What were you dreaming about Ash?"\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Walls seemed to close in on Ash.

\*\*"Trapped!" he thought\*\*. "Bugger; I can't even keep my big mouth closed when I'm asleep!" he looked up into Misty's inquisitive aqua-green eyes.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Wellâ€¦" he croaked. \*\*"We wereâ€¦" He was interrupted as Brock suddenly appeared in between them. (Author's note: Ã¡-la 'Fire and Ice'!) \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"She's going out with me!" he squealed, clasping his hands together and sighing from pure exultation. \*\*

\*\*

\*\*"Correction Brock" said Ash, silently thanking God for the escape. \*\*"She's going out with us."\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Double correction" interrupted Misty. \*\*"She's going out with you

two. I have to go to Linda's \*\*match." Brock may have been 'away-with-the-Clefairys', but he was still able to see the disappointment that quickly flashed over the younger boy's face.\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Actuallyâ€| " contradicted a gentle voice, \*\*"I think going to a PokÃ©mon match might be good fun!" Brock gazed at Jo. The degrading pink dress was gone, and in its place was an orange top the same tone as Misty's hair and a denim skirt so short Jesse would have refused to wear it. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

\*\*"Okay then. We'd better get going." Misty looked at her watch. \*\*"Let's hurry so we get good \*\*seats!" Brock tried to sneak a look at Ash's face to see his reaction, but Ash and Misty were already running out of the PokÃ©mon Centre. Jo linked her arm with his and dragged him after them in the direction of the Ice Field. \*\*\*\*\*

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## 2. Chapter 4

> <meta name="Generator"> Chapter Four \*\*

Chapter Four

—

League Deja Vu?

—\*\*

\*\*"The Trainers are entering the arena!" \*\*exclaimed the announcer over the PA. Linda entered the Ice Field and began waving to the crowd. \*\*"The red Trainer in her first ever League battle, Linda Winhamall!" \*\*The crowd went wild, especially the boys when Linda did a 'Misty' wink, but followed it up by blowing a kiss.

\*\*"Tart," \*\*Ash caught himself muttering. He blushed as Misty grabbed his arm.

\*\*"Look Ash!" \*\*Misty exclaimed, pointing to the side doors of the arena. A familiar face was walking up to the podium opposite to the one Linda was already standing on.

\*\*"And the green Trainer, a PokÃ©mon League favourite, Richie

Dervan!" \*\*Ash, Misty and Brock gaped at their old friend who had knocked Ash out of the League years before. \*\*"Will the Trainers please send out their first Pok  mon?" \*\*the announcer asked.

Richie threw a Pok  ball.

\*\*"Zippo! Go!" \*\*he called, but now it was a Charmeleon rather than a Charmander who appeared. Linda grabbed a ball, and allowed it to open in her hands so the beam shot down to the arena.

\*\*"You can do it!" \*\*she called encouragingly to her Pok  mon, a cream coloured cat.

\*\*"Persian" \*\*it purred.

\*\*"Zippo!" \*\*called Richie. \*\*"You can knock out that thing with one hit! FireBlast now!"\*\*

\*\* "Char!" \*\*A huge cross of fire flew from Zippo's mouth. Linda didn't even flinch.

\*\*"Persian, use Agility and FurySwipes!"\*\* Persian suddenly became a blur, and the FireBlast blew harmlessly into the sky where it burnt out. Suddenly, Persian appeared out of nowhere and pounced on the Fire Pok  mon, viciously slashing it repeatedly.

Richie had a sweatdrop.

\*\*"Zippo, slash it back!" \*\*Zippo reached up and slashed Persian across its face. It jumped back, yowling in pain. Linda gasped, and then growled.

\*\*"Right Persian, we're done playing around! BubbleBeam now!"\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "BubbleBeam?" \*\*the group in the stands repeated.

\*\*"Clever  |" \*\*remarked Brock. \*\*"Normal element Pok  mon can learn other elemental attacks."\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "Gosh Misty, your cousin sure is a great Pok  mon Trainer!" \*\*complimented Jo.

\*\*"Yeah, too bad it doesn't run in the family  |" \*\*Ash couldn't help but add, but his insult was cut short when his jaw met Misty's fist.

Down on the battlefield, Persian was gathering energy for the next attack. It arched its back and let loose a stream of paralysing bubbles \_(don't ask me where from, it's like 'How does a Diglett do Scratch?')\_ which hit the Charmeleon dead on.

\*\*"Noooooooo!" \*\*cried Richie in anguish, as Zippo collapsed to the ice covered floor.

"Richie's first Pok  mon has been defeated!" the announcer called. \*\*"Charmeleon is called back as\*\* \*\*the\*\* \*\*green Trainer moves down

one Pok  mon." \*\*One of the little green bars under Richie's picture disappeared, while Linda's remained intact. \*\*"What Pok  mon will be replacing Charmeleon?" \*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* \*\*Richie threw another ball.

\*\*"Gummo, I choose you!" \*\*In the stands, Ash, Misty and Brock fell over. Ash got up first.

\*\*"Hey man, that's my turf!" \*\*he yelled down to Richie. The Pok  ball hit the ice and opened, the red beam forming quickly.

\*\*"Mister?" \*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "Looks like young Dervan has chosen a Mr. Mime for his next battle!" \*\*called the announcer (well duh).

\*\*"Be careful Gummo!" \*\*called Richie from the green podium. \*\*"That Persian is stronger than it looks! Keep your distance, use Hypnosis!"\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* \*\*Gummo nodded, and began chanting and waving its arms rhythmically. It didn't take long for Persian to fall asleep and Linda returned it as one of her bars disappeared. Linda considered her two possibilities, then took a Pok  ball. The beam shot out, but it didn't really form, as this Pok  mon didn't really have a form.

\*\*"Ditto!" \*\*it chirped.

\*\*"Ditto! Transform now!" \*\*Ditto's body started to shimmer, and it remoulded itself into a Mr. Mime. Up in the stands, Ash's eyes were gleamed over.

\*\*"It's not fair!" \*\*he wailed. \*\*"I want a Ditto! What is it with Dittos and girl Trainers?" Although I prefer Duplieka to Linda! \*\*he snickered to himself.

Down on the ice, Linda was getting worried. She knew that she had to pull this off because her remaining Pok  mon would be useless against Mr. Mime.

\*\*"Gummo!" \*\*Richie called. \*\*"Confusion!"\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "Ditto!" \*\*Linda called. \*\*"Substitute!" \*\*The Confusion attack harmlessly broke the Substitute. \*\*"Great job Ditto!" \*\*laughed Linda. \*\*"Now, Psychic!" \*\*The purple blast of telekinetic energy hit Gummo, but didn't cause any real damage.

\*\*"Ditto!"\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "Gummo!" \*\*they both called. \*\*"Metronome!" \*\*Both Pok  mon started each other down, and started to wave their fingers back and forth. Linda, Richie and everyone watching held their breath; which was come up with the better attack? Gummo was the first to come out of its Metronome trance. It used  |SandAttack. But it failed. There was a lot of falling over in the stands. Now all eyes were on Ditto.

\*\*"Mime!" \*\*it called as it used  |HyperBeam, and sent Gummo flying across the stadium. Richie cried out as his Pok  mon fainted. Another green bar gone; last chance.\*\* \*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* \*\*Ash nudged Misty.

\*\*"We know what's coming next!" \*\*they giggled, as Jo watched them.

\*\*"Cute couple aren't they?" \*\*she murmured to Brock.

\*\*"Yeah, real cute apart from the fact they're not actually a couple."\*\*

\*\*

"They're not?"

\*\*

\*\* "Nope. As much as they want to be, they're both too stubborn. It's sad really." \*\*This time, it was Ash who hit Brock with Misty's mallet (after he and Misty had stopped blushing that is!).

Richie looked at his last Pok  ball; he knew that the Pok  mon inside wouldn't disappoint him.

\*\*"Here comes his Pikachu." \*\*Ash murmured to Jo.

\*\*" Sparky, don't let me down!" \*\*The red and white ball thudded on the ice, and clicked as it opened. However, like Zippo, Sparky looked a little different.

\*\*Rai! Chu chu!" \*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* Awesome, a Raichu!" \*\*breathed Ash. \*\*"I wish Pikachu was here."\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "Hey, Ash?" \*\*asked Misty. \*\*"Does the back of that head look familiar to you?" \*\*Ash followed Misty's gaze to a young man with longish dark-green hair sitting a few bleachers in front of them.

\*\*"It can't be  |" \*\*said Ash.

\*\*"But it isâ€|" \*\*said Misty.

\*\*"It's Tracey!" \*\*they both said.

\*\*"Hey Trace!" \*\*called Ash, throwing a handful of crisps at the boy. He turned around, knowing that there were only three people who would brazenly throw snack food at him, and his mother wasn't there, so it had to beâ€|

\*\*"Ash! Misty!" \*\*Tracey got out of his seat and climbed the bleachers to sit next to Misty. \*\*"What are you guys doing here?"\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "Watching my cousin! Shhh!" \*\*The group turned their attention back to the match.

Ditto was now a Raichu. It had taken considerable damage and Linda knew its next attack was its last, and it would have to do a lot in order to make things easier for her remaining PokÃ©mon.

\*\*"Ditto! BodySlam now!" \*\*Ditto hurled all its weight on to Sparky, taking about a third of its HP away.

\*\*"Sparky!" \*\*called Richie. \*\*"ThunderBolt!" \*\*As the lightning hit the exhausted Ditto, it was knocked out immediately. Time for sudden death.

\*\*Well, this certainly is an electric match!" \*\*joked the idiotic announcer, then dodged all the food thrown at him. \*\*"Young Winhamall only has one PokÃ©mon left - I sure hope it's the right one!" \*\*

\*\* \*\*

Linda fingered her remaining PokÃ©ball. She opened her blue eyes wide and slipped off her glasses with her free hand.

\*\*"It isâ€|" \*\*The beam shot down to the awaiting Raichu and formed to reveal Linda's first ever PokÃ©mon.

\*\*"Euvi?"\*\*

\*\* \*\*

\*\* "This is it Eevee! TakeDown attack!" \*\*Eevee obeyed and hurled itself at the Electric PokÃ©mon. There was a thud as the extremely high-levelled evolution PokÃ©mon made contact with Sparky. And it was all over.

Richie wiped away tears as he recalled Sparky and watched Linda run down to hug Eevee. Ash cringed as he heard the horrible 'ping' noise of Richie's last bar vanishing. He felt really bad for Richie; he knew what losing felt like, but he'd never had a first round knockout like this one.

Later on, a group consisting of Ash, Misty, Brock, Tracey, Linda and Jo were all hanging out in Ash-tachi's cottage. Linda was acting really superior about her win, and was ordering Misty around like a

maid. Misty, surprisingly did as she was told and every time she stood up to refill Linda's drink, Ash felt like slapping Linda. Tracey on the other hand, was completely enthralled by Linda, and would gladly have moved Heaven and Earth so she could find a place to rest her feet.

Ash was jumping around the room, waiting for his match and looking at that clock every 2 minutes. Misty knew he must be feeling pretty anxious; if Richie beat him last time and had a first round knockout. Ash was staring out of the window, completely oblivious to everyone else in the room. Misty came up to him and gave him a quick hug from behind. It was a good thing it was from behind or she would have seen his face immediately blush beet red. The two chatted for a few minutes about nothing in particular. They were so wrapped up in each others company that they didn't notice that Brock and Tracey were watching them and comparing times in their separate journeys with them that they'd thought there was something more than friendship and a broken bike going on.

~# \*\*Author Notes #~\*\*

\*\*

I'm sorry anti=Kenjis for bringing Tracey into this - I don't like him either but I have an ulterior motive \*evil giggle\* There is method to my madness! BTW, in case you didn't know, 'Ash-tachi' means Ash, Misty, Brock, Pikachu and sometimes Togepi. And I didn't make that up, it's a proper term.

Chp 5 - A Man to Man Talk - is coming soon XXX

\*\*

### 3. Chapter 5

> <meta name="ProgId"> Chapter Five

\*\*Chapter Five\*\*

'A Man to Man Talk'

--

Ash couldn't help feeling sorry for the 10 year old boy who recalled his second Pok  mon. Ash's first Pok  mon out, Donphan had beaten a Venonat and a Lickitung and still had full HP.

\*\*"I'm gonna win this!" \*\*he winked to Misty, who was standing a little way behind him. The other were up in the bleachers.

\*\*"Don't get too cocky," \*\*Misty warned. \*\*"Didn't you learn anything from your Grass Field battle with Jeanette Fisher last time?" \*\*Ash sobered immediately.

\*\*"Gooooooooo Mankey!" \*\*called the boy.

\*\*"Man - kee!" \*\*the Fighting Pok  mon screeched in a high pitched voice



**\*\*\_Bad move\_\*\*** thought Misty. A Rock Throw and a half hearted Tackle later and it was all over. Ash was through to his second field.

**\*\*"Well, that wasn't too hard!"** **\*\*laughed** Ash, as he and Misty walked down the road towards the Pok  mon Centre.

**\*\*"It was your first field and it was only a little kid Mr Pok  mon Master!"** **\*\*Misty** said, pushing him slightly. **\*\*"Don't get a big head!"** **\*\*Ash** lightly shoved her back, knowing full well she was right, but only joking. After this playful teasing, they both fell into an uneasy silence.

Ash sneaked a look at Misty out of the corner of his eye. She was looking dead ahead at the road, and her eyes were fixated on the path. Ash allowed himself a longer look.

**\*\*\_"Misty's not so bad to be with when we're not fighting." \_\*\***Ash noted. Ash continued watching her as she raised a hand and flicked an annoying lock of hair from her eyes with an exasperated sound. As it fell in her vision once again, she grunted in annoyance and tried to pry it back into her ponytail. In the end, she gave up and deftly yanked out the purple hair-band.

Ash inhaled sharply when the orange bangs fell softly around Misty's face - like it was framing a picture. Ash rarely got to see Misty with her hair down - unless he stayed up until she fell asleep, then walked over to her sleeping bag to watch her sleep - **\*\*\_"not that I do that all the time or anything!" \_\*\***he quickly added to his thoughts. **\*\*\_"Just once or twice  a week  " \_\*\***

**\*\* "What are you staring at Ash?!"** **\*\*Misty's** words interrupted Ash's thoughts, and he blinked.

**\*\*"Waaaaa?"\*\***

**\*\* "Uggh. Never mind."** **\*\*They** passed the caf   from that morning. Ash took his chance.

**\*\*"Hey Myst, er, wanna get some ice-cream? My treat!"** **\*\*Misty** looked up at him in mock horror.

**\*\*"Ice-cream? That's all I'm worth to you? A lousy ice-cream???"\*\*** she laughed playfully. **\*\* "Fine\*\*** **\*\*Mr Ketchum,** but I'm ordering a double scoop!" **\*\*She** began to walk into the caf  , but Ash grabbed her arm. He tried to ignore the tingling feeling that was coursing its way up his arm while Misty looked at him questioningly.

**\*\*No, er, I-I mean you're right"** **\*\*stammered** Ash, still not letting go of Misty's arm, although the tingly feeling had spread all over his body and he now had to ignore a thumping pain in his chest. He shook it off - **\*\*\_"Misty's  Misty's my  best friend," \_\*\***he thought to himself. **\*\*\_"I shouldn't be reacting like this  just  just to her - touch." \_\*\***

**\*\*"Ash?"** **\*\*Misty's** questioned.

**\*\*"You are worth m-more to me than an ice-cream Mis-ty."** **\*\*Misty** blushed suddenly, and giggled awkwardly. Ash hurriedly let go of her arm. **\*\*"I mean, er  I'm gonna take you out for dinner tonight - yeah**

- at that fancy French restaurant! \*\*

Misty grabbed his hands, and even through his gloves he could feel the warmth from her palms. The tingling started again, but Ash couldn't bring himself to pull his hands away - he didn't want to.

\*\*"I was only joking idiot; you don't have to doâ€|something like that!"\*\*

\*\* "But I-I want to."\*\*

\*\* "Are you crazier than usual Ash? We can't just walk into the poshest restaurant around!"\*\*

\*\* "Sure we can!" \*\*They were almost at the PokÃ©mon Centre. Misty was about to grab Ash's hand - when she realised that she was already holding his hand. She dropped it quickly.

\*\*"Okay," \*\*she laughed. \*\*"It's a da - deal!" \*\*She caught herself just in time. \*\*"I really want to go to that restaâ€|" \*\*Her voice trailed off as they looked through the windows of the PokÃ©mon Centre and saw Linda, Brock, Tracey and Jo. Their faces fell.

\*\*"We're never gonna get to that restaurant alive." \*\*Ash murmured. Already, Brock, Tracey and Linda were making kissy faces through the window at them. If this was how their friends reacted when they were just walking together - what would they do if they heard they were going to a restaurant together? \*\*\_"On a purely platonic date of course" \_\*\*Ash reassured his conflicting emotions.

So it was all set. Ash made reservations for 9 - that way they could eat with their friends in the evening and still be hungry for the restaurant. Getting out without Brock or their PokÃ©mon noticing they were gone would be the hard partâ€|

Later that day, Ash, Brock and Tracey were in the sitting room of Ash-tachi's cottage. Misty had taken Linda, Jo and Pikachu off somewhere.

\*\*"Probably shopping!" \*\*the ever masculine Brock had joked. Tracey had been doing most of the talking - and Brock had been doing most of the listening. It didn't take long for the older teens to notice that Ash wasn't listening at all. He was staring out the window and fiddling with his own fingers.

After they had said 'Ash?' about 7 times, they decided to take psychical action and belted him out of his dreamy trance with cushions.

\*\*"Oh yeah - that's very mature!" \*\*Ash yelled as he tried to see how far the cushion would fit down Tracey's throat.

\*\*"Sorry man, but you were off in another world," \*\*Tracey managed to squeak out after the padding had been extracted.

\*\*"Yeah, day-dreaming about Linda!" \*\*Brock started to make kissy noises. Ash couldn't help but laugh.

\*\*"What???!!!"\*\*

\*\* "Don't play dumb with me Ashton Ketchum!" \*\*stated Brock. \*\*"I saw how disappointed you were when Misty said she was taking the girls out somewhere!"\*\*

\*\* "You got rocks in your head Brock!" \*\*laughed Ash. He laid back on the couch again. \*\*"Sorry to dis-allure you, but I actually can't stand Linda." \*\*His face grew hard. \*\*"She's at least a half way decent PokÃ©mon Trainer, but she's not so special. Misty's worth a million of her - I can't believe they're from the same family!"\*\*

\*\* \*\*Tracey and Brock exchanged a knowing look as Ash fell silent.

\*\*"Ash?" \*\*began Brock, cautiously. \*\*"Youâ€¦you do know that you're in love with Misty - don't you?"\*\*

\*\*"Waaaaaaaaa?"\*\* yelled Ash, immediately paling. \*\*"Nâ€¦n - no. I mean, no I'm not!"\*\* Tracey sat on the couch next to Ash.

\*\*"My, interesting complexion you've got Ash. One minute you're blushing and the next as pale as a sheet! Something's going onâ€¦" \*\*Brock sat down on the other side of Ash, making him feel completely trapped and very uncomfortable.

\*\*"Ash - look at me." \*\*Ash pulled his eyes away from his hands and into Brock's face. \*\*"Now look me in the eyes and tell me that you don't fancy Misty." \*\*Ash lowered his eyes involuntarily to around Brock's nose.

\*\*"I don't fancyâ€¦Misty," \*\*he spluttered.

\*\*"A ha!" \*\*yelled Tracey, jumping up. \*\*"You weren't looking Brock in the eyes!" \*\*he taunted.

\*\*"How can you tell?!" \*\*shouted Ash, jumping up too. \*\*"Brock doesn't have any eyes!"\*\*

\*\* "Heyâ€¦" \*\*moaned Brock, sweatdropping. \*\*"â€¦cheap shot!"\*\*

\*\* "Anyway," \*\*interrupted Tracey. \*\*"Brock's eyes are not on discussion here - your love life is!" \*\*Brock and Ash stared at Tracey.

\*\*"Trace man, you are such a girl."\*\*

\*\* "Huh?"\*\*

\*\* "Never mind."\*\*

\*\* \*\*Brock stood up.

\*\*"Ashâ€¦" \*\*he began.

\*\*"I DON'T!"\*\*

\*\* "It's called denial," \*\*remarked Tracey.

\*\*"Shut up!"\*\*

\*\* "Oooh, touchy!"\*\*

\*\* "Tracey - are you sure you don't have ovaries?"\*\*

\*\* "What?"\*\*

\*\* "Never mind."\*\*

\*\* "Anyway," \*\*Brock continued. \*\*"Ask yourself one question - can you picture yourself married and living with any other girl but Misty?" \*\*As Ash fell silent, the older boys turned the topic back to Tracey's uncle's sweet shop.

That night, Ash and Misty prepared themselves for some serious bluffing to get out of the cottage without Brock catching on. However, Brock decided that he was retiring to read about 8 o' clock - mumbling something about how being the world's most gorgeous guy takes a lot out of you. When Misty tried to sneak in to get her dress at 8:30, he appeared to be sound asleep.

\*\*"Huh," \*\*she shrugged to Ash, standing behind her in the doorway. \*\*"Must be out lucky night." \*\*She didn't see Ash immediately turn red because she was too busy trying to hide the fact that she was blushing too by rummaging through her clothes. \*\*\_"That did not come out the way I meant it!" \_\*\*she thought.

20 minutes later, Ash sat on the sofa, picking uncomfortably at his shirt cuffs. He hated wearing suits. He stopped fidgeting as the bathroom door opened quietly and Misty stepped out, looking equally uncomfortable. She was wearing a simple navy dress cut above her knees. She had let down her hair (secretly because she knew Ash liked it down) and for the first time in her life she had applied a tiny smudge of blue eyeshadow.

Misty laughed at Ash's face. He was gazing at her, awestricken. Usually, just the hair down was enough to make his resolve melt away, but as he looked at her now, he felt the last of his wall crumble away for good. She looked beautiful, and for once he didn't care if he thought so.

\*\*"What? Does it really look that awful? I did my best with the makeup, but I'm not used to it!" \*\*Ash swallowed and stood up from the couch.

\*\*"You lookâ€¦fine Misty. I mean, great - you look great," \*\*he stammered. Then he wanted to bang his head against a wall. \*\*\_"Very smooth Casanova!" \_\*\*he reprimanded himself. \*\*"Where did you get the makeup from?"\*\*

\*\* "Jo lent it to me."\*\*

\*\* "Oh."\*\*

\*\* \*\*Misty studied Ash. The suit looked a little dishevelled, but at least there wasn't a hat in sight! Misty didn't have the heart to offer Ash some hair gel, but his hair was a little too spiky for a posh restaurant. She grabbed his hand, and the tingling feeling surged through Ash again.

\*\*"Come here," \*\*she said, flopping down on the sofa and pulling Ash

with her. **"Let me sort out your hat-hair."**

**"My what!?"** began Ash, but was instantly incapable of forming words as Misty began combing his hair with her fingers.

**"W-w-wouldn't it b-be easier if you g-got a comb?"**

**"Nah, I don't want to go in there again. Don't wanna risk Brock waking up."**

**"O-kay"** Ash was just beginning to relax when Misty caught a glimpse of his watch

**"Ohmigod, we're gonna be late!"** The spell was broken and they ran out the door; Ash practically dragging Misty along in her short spiky heels.

As Brock opened his eyes (oh you know what I mean!) he heard a soft click and a series of little clicks down the path. He swung his legs over the side of the bed and walked into the living room. Brock silently opened the front door a crack and saw two figures, one with familiar red hair, disappear into the night.

He grinned, and quietly shut the door.

What an opportunity!

\*\*\*\*

#### 4. Chapter